

Fighting for Justice

“We shall overcome”. Such a powerful phrase, used throughout generations in a battle for freedom and equality. So many people have fought in this battle. One of them being our country’s great hero, Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King has inspired, and saved, so many and so much in this world. I believe that if he were alive today, he would have looked upon our nation with a happy tear in his eye. He would have been joyous. Joyous to see our country’s president. Joyous to see that not just blacks, but all people of this nation, rising up against injustice and oppression. He would have smiled to see blacks and whites playing together at the playground, eating together in restaurants, coexisting with each other fairly and equally. Even though not all people are treating others with the respect they deserve, and our conflicts with society are certainly not yet solved, we’re getting there. Slowly and steadily, we are rising to overcome our nation’s problems. To this day, the phrase “We shall overcome” still rings throughout minds, young and old, everywhere.

Justice is like the sun shining through the clouds on a rainy day. It is the beacon of hope in the darkness of society. Even though some justice can be the wrong kind, the kind that involves revenge, I’m talking about the right kind. The kind that makes you feel accepted and equal. During the Civil Right Movement, protestors both white and black, were treated with anything but justice. They were denied basic human rights and privileges. They were called horrible names and told they were worthless. Blacks were discriminated against and treated very unfairly by so many people everywhere. Justice seemed like a million miles away, but they still fought for it. These brave heroes fought for what they deserved and won this great battle. Personally, I wish I had these people’s bravery to follow me throughout my own life. If I were in that

situation, I'm not sure I would've been able to keep my emotions under control. What I found most touching about the whole Civil Rights Movement was that in the end, both whites and blacks came together to fight injustice. From the church bombing to "Bloody Sunday", these astounding people battled racism, negativity, and injustice, and made a major change in our country's nation that still remains to this day.

Where justice is the beacon of hope, injustice is the horrible darkness that swallows the light of that hope. It drags us down and makes us feel unintelligent and/or unwanted. It's the girl who was denied access to a store because of her skin color or the boy who was beaten in the stairwell because of his sexuality. Sadly, many of us experience injustice to this day, even though all people should be treated equally and with kindness. An example of injustice in your everyday life is feminism. Not the feminist themselves, but the offensive people who shame women and think of them as inferior to men. Women are still fighting for their rights, but it's not as bad as it was 70 years ago. 70 years ago a woman couldn't even have a job outside of her house or vote. She was looked down upon by the men of her house and society forced her to raise her own little girl to be a perfect, proper lady because that was the "right thing". Today, it's most certainly not that bad. Another good example of injustice is the LGBT community. The same as feminism, it is not as bad today as it was back then. Thankfully, our country has legalized gay marriage; however, back then people who were a part of the LGBT community were actually killed. In President Barack Obama's speech for the 50th anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery Marches, it writes, "If you think nothing's changed in the past 50 years, ask somebody who lived through the Selma or Chicago or Los Angeles of the 1950s. Ask the female CEO who once might have been assigned to the secretarial pool if nothing's changed. Ask your gay friend if it's easier to be

out and proud in America now than it was thirty years ago.” In my opinion, this quote is very powerful. It tells about how much American’s have changed, and fought through all of the injustice we were faced with. It shows that even though things aren’t amazing now, it got a lot better overall. We are the winners in our battles against injustice, and even though it may seem dark, we prevail.

Oppression is something that nobody should ever practice, for it hurts so many people. One of the major feelings blacks faced during the Civil Rights Movement was oppression. They were beaten down not only physically, but mentally due to the harsh words and negativity of the whites. Police brutality was an example of oppression along with inequality. An example of oppression in our everyday lives is bullying. Bullying bruises the spirits of our nation’s children and, sometimes, adults as well. Though many of us try to prevent it, the problem continues to resurface in society. Another example of oppression is, basically, violence in general. The dictionary definition of the word oppression is to suppress by maltreatment or abuse; to overburden; to depress mentally. Violence is abuse, as stated in the definition. I believe that school can be an example for many people, including me, though not as severe. It causes a ton of stress and sometimes over burdens us with homework and fatigue. Oppression is a horrible thing, in my opinion, and nobody should ever have to deal with it in their lives.

There was a time when I experienced injustice. Not my own, but a good friend of mine’s. She was being bullied very badly in school and partially at home, so she never really felt safe. I couldn’t just stand around, and I stood up to help her. It made me really angry that she was being

treated the way she was because she was such an amazing person with a great personality and I didn't understand why people were making fun of her. My mind couldn't comprehend why people would try to hurt someone so cool and funny and sweet like she was. At first all I did was stand up for her and yell at the bullies, but when it became too much to handle and didn't stop, my rage overtook me and I ended up hitting one of the boys in the bully group. Looking back on it, it was probably not the best decision I've ever made, but it seemed to work. After that, the bullies knew not to mess with us and left her alone. Some advice that I have to give to somebody in my situation is to try to contain your anger (if you have any) and don't lash out. Tell a trusted adult about what's happening and they will hopefully help. For a person in my friend's situation, stay strong and don't let their words get to you. Confide in your friends, for they will help, and always keep fighting.

To sum things up, the people who fought for their rights and equality in the Civil Rights Movement were very brave. If Dr. King were alive today, I believe he would be happy about how our nation turned out to be. Oppression and inequality are, sadly, still seen in this nation to this day; however, it is not as bad as it was back then. This nation mostly has equality and freedom over racism and injustice, which is something great and beautiful. I hope that the people who are being bullied and denied certain rights prevail and keep fighting through their troubles, just as Dr. King and the African Americans of the Civil Rights Movement did. In conclusion, the people who fought for their rights were some of the bravest Americans to this day.